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THE BAPTIST

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

SBC leaders declare Solemn Assembly

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — A Nov. 12 open letter calling Southern Baptists to observe a Solemn Assembly day of prayer in January declared that Americans "live in desperate times" and need "a heal-the-land kind of blessing" from God.

A Call to Solemn Assembly, issued by the Southern Baptist Convention's Great Commission Council (GCC) — composed of the heads of the convention's entity organizations — echoed a call by Bryant Wright, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga., for churches to observe a day in January as a day of seeking God in prayer and repentance.

"We live in desperate times. Our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our nation reflect the ruinous effects of our sinful ways. To some degree we all have pursued the things of the world and stand guilty of worshipping the created, not the Creator," the letter said. "...We must repent and come before the Father with a contrite heart. We need a heal-the-land kind of blessing."

Richard Land, president of the SBC's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville and GCC chairman, said the need for repentance is clear.

"It is undeniable that God's people need to return in repentance and humility to Him in service to a renewed commitment to Christ and the Great Commission," Land told Baptist Press. "We are tragically content in our sinful state, blissfully unaware of our position before a holy God."

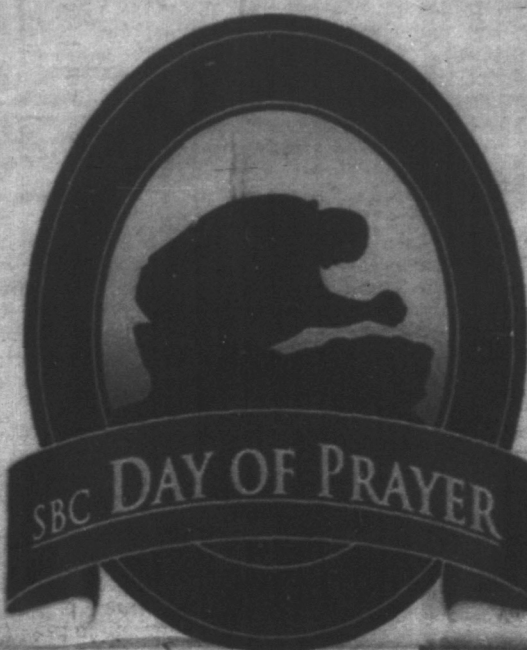
"We must begin with each of us examining our own hearts and getting right with God. We must fall before God, broken in the recognition that our sinfulness is an affront to Him."

Land added: "There is simply no substitute for repentance. We can't legislate the America we want; we can't program our way to the America we want. We can't campaign our way to the America we want and we can't elect our way to the America that we so desperately desire."

"We need to importune God for a heaven-sent awakening that will ripen into the reformation America must have at every level of our society."

The challenge to hold a nationwide Solemn Assembly was an element of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force report adopted during the June 2010 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando. The report asked that the newly elected SBC president lead the network of more than 42,000 churches to concerted prayer "for the purpose of calling Christ's people to return to God, to repentance, and to humility in service to a renewed commitment to Christ and the Great Commission."

The GCC open letter said repentance must be accompanied by renewed dedication to Christ.



- Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca. (Jeff Iorg).
 - Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. (Daniel L. Akin).
 - Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. (R. Philip Roberts).
 - Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville (Richard D. Land).
- The Great Commission Council serves as an advisory group to the entities listed above, and does not exert control over the entities.

A Call to Solemn Assembly

We live in desperate times. Our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our nation reflect the ruinous effects of our sinful ways. To some degree we all have pursued the things of the world and stand guilty of worshipping the created, not the Creator (Matthew 6:24; 1 John 2:15).

However far we may have wandered from the calling God has placed on our lives, God has not moved. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Where do we place our trust? Have we abandoned our faith in the Lord? In many of our lives, our passion for Him has grown cold. We are guilty of bearing false witness before the God of the universe.

Apart from the cover provided by Christ's work of atonement, there is no hope for a stiff-necked people (Isaiah 13:11; Revelation 2:4). God's judgment is swift and sure; His wrath is without compare — only the blood of His Son holds back His sword of justice (Galatians 2:20). For those who call upon the name of His Son, His mercies are without end (Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21).

We must repent and come before the Father with a contrite heart. We need a heal-the-land kind of blessing (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).

We must, as people of God, enter into sacred assembly, prostrate ourselves before Him, confess our sins, repent of our transgressions, and thank God for His merciful blessings upon us (Joel 1:13-14, 2:12; Romans 12:1).

It is critical that the people called Southern Baptist individually and corporately renew their covenant commitment to the King of kings and Lord of lords (Mark 12:30).

Pastors, as shepherds of His flock, we urge you to call the Christ-followers in your care to consecrate themselves, to throw off that which distracts, tempts, or otherwise disables them from obediently following God (Genesis 35:2-5; Exodus 19:10-11; Joel 2:16). We need to make way for the Lord (Hebrews 8:10).

We join Dr. Bryant Wright, President of the Southern Baptist Convention, in calling Southern Baptists to a Solemn Assembly ... that in the sight of God and His witnesses we might renew our commitment to Christ and the Great Commission (Zechariah 1:3).

May God alone be glorified.

— Great Commission Council of the Southern Baptist Convention

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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Bible literacy spotlighted on new website

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Greg Thornbury teaches Old and New Testament survey courses to some of the brightest students from some of the most respected churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. He has discovered a surprising problem: They don't know their Bibles.

"There have been some moments where I'm talking about a biblical story and getting that stare like, 'I'm not really following you here,'" said Thornbury, dean of the school of theology and missions at Baptist-affiliated Union University in Jackson, Tn. "I began to realize that [teaching] what happens in the Bible, story for story, scene for scene, is just not something that is really being done that well in churches."

Thornbury began administering a Bible facts quiz on the first day of class, asking for information such as the name of Isaac's brother and a list of the Ten Commandments. Most students failed.

Yet Thornbury believes he has found a remedy to such biblical illiteracy by partnering with a coalition of evangelicals, including several Southern Baptists, to launch BibleMesh.com, a website that teaches the Bible as a single storyline focusing on Jesus.

Published by former American Standard CEO Emmanuel Kampouris, the website tells the entire biblical story through 90 minutes of video animation anchored by New York City pastor Tim Keller, author of the best-seller, *The Reason for God*.

The website also features commentary by a plethora of noted evangelicals: Hundreds of one-

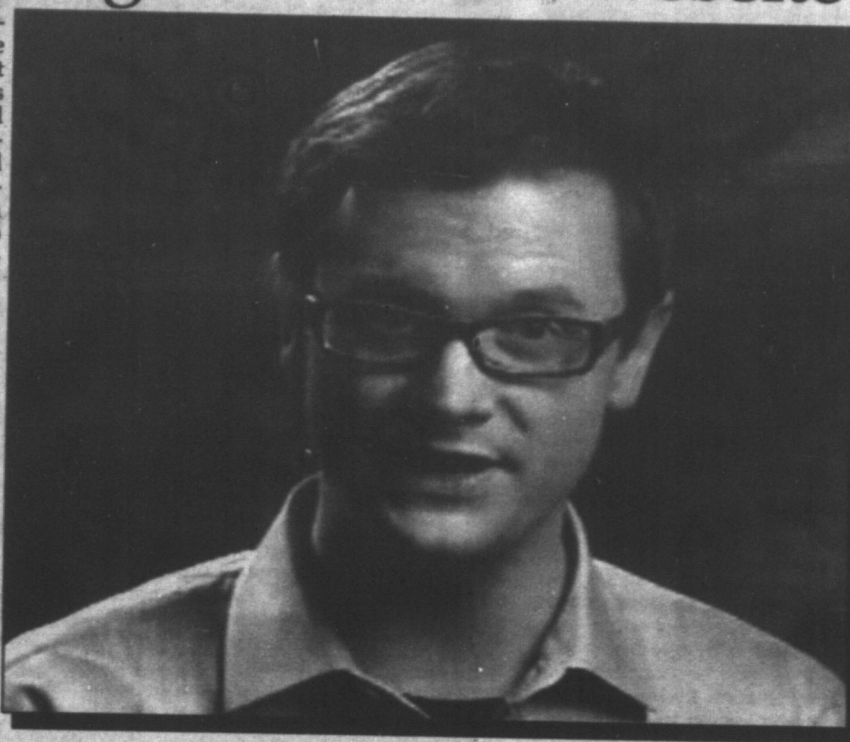
page articles introduce key Bible ideas while short teaching videos expound crucial points. A personalized learning tool tests users' knowledge, shows them what they need to study, and monitors their progress.

The site also features social networking for individuals and churches.

Access to the Biblical Story Course is \$49.99 for individuals, with discounts for church groups. Pastors receive free access for one year if they sign up on the site before Jan. 1.

"BibleMesh is not just facts. It's a whole-Bible theology approach to learning the Bible," said Thornbury, the project's theological editor. He added that he plans to use the site in Old and New Testament survey courses, biblical theology classes, and even his adult Sunday School class at Englewood Church in Jackson, Tn.

Among the other Southern Baptists on the BibleMesh editorial team are Mark Coppenger, professor of Christian apologetics at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and C. Ben Mitchell, Graves Professor of



ON LINE — Greg Thornbury, dean of the school of theology and missions at Union University in Jackson, Tn., teaches about Noah's flood in a video for www.BibleMesh.com, a website that explains the Bible as a single storyline focusing on Jesus. (BP photo)

Moral Philosophy at Union University. Teaching videos feature an International Mission Board missionary and professors from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Union University, and Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Appearing in videos on the importance of the Bible are Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. and Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham.

Non-Southern Baptists involved include Alistair Begg, senior pastor of Parkside Church in metropolitan Cleveland; Philip Ryken, president of Wheaton College in Illinois; Peter Akinola, longtime Anglican archbishop of Nigeria; and Christopher Ash, director of London's Cornhill Training Course.

Coppenger, who also is pastor of Evanston Church in Illinois, plans to use

BibleMesh as a discipleship tool. "We have a lot of people come to the church who have little or no Bible background," Coppenger said. "Many are students at Northwestern University, and they come from countries where they have not been exposed to the Bible or have been barely exposed to the Bible."

"It's going to be a joy this fall to give them complimentary access that our church will purchase."

For Mitchell, BibleMesh represents a deep personal interest. When he was saved at age 18, he knew little about the Bible and developed a voracious appetite for studying it. Now he hopes to pass that appetite on to others.

"Both as a pastor then as a seminary professor and a college professor, my interest in others knowing the biblical story has only deepened over time," Mitchell said.

Looking back

10 years ago

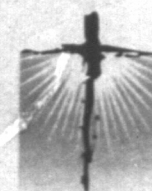
A total of 1,558 messengers for the 2,073 Mississippi Baptist churches, meeting in the 165th session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, ratified without opposition a record Cooperative Program budget of \$30,047,997 for 2001.

20 years ago

Victory Temple, Greenville, an African-American congregation sponsored by First Church, Greenville, celebrates three years of ministry with a standing room only crowd of 164 people in the mobile chapel provided by the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. Eddie Jones, pastor.

50 years ago

The sole boys' dormitory on the campus of Baptist-affiliated Clarke Memorial College in Newton is destroyed by fire. There were no injuries; all 96 occupants of the building made their way to safety.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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No. 44



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Profanity skyrockets

LOS ANGELES (BP) — Four months after an appeals court struck down the Federal Communications Commission's broadcast standards, a new study shows that profanity on broadcast television has risen nearly 70% in the past five years. The study by the Parents Television Council, which compared the first two weeks of the networks' 2010 fall lineup with the first two weeks of the 2005 fall lineup, found that profanity increased 69%. Movies, news programs, and sporting events were not included in the study. The study also reported that harsher profanities are now being used, and it added that the greatest increase in the use of the harshest profanities took place during the 8 p.m. Eastern period, often known as the Family Hour, and at 9 p.m. Eastern. Among the study's findings:

- "use of the bleeped or muted f-word increased from 11 instances total in 2005 to 276 instances in 2010," an increase of 2,409%.
- "use of the bleeped s-word in the family hour increased from 11 uses in 2005 to 42 uses in 2010," an increase of 281%.
- "use of the bleeped or muted s-word increased from 11 instances in 2005 to 95 instances in 2010," an increase of 763%.
- use of "anatomical and sexual references" also saw significant increases.
- the "Fox broadcast network showed the greatest per-hour increase in use of profanity from 2005 to 2010," with an increase of 269%.

The rise in TV profanity has resulted in some companies creating products to assist parents. One company, TVGuardian, sells a device that mutes foul language on television. Another company, ClearPlay, sells a DVD player that mutes bad language and also skips objectionable scenes on DVD movies.



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**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

Do you remember the massive derision last year when conservatives warned that "death panels" were part of the 2,200-page legislation that became known as ObamaCare? The criticism was withering.

"Right now it seems there is an intentional effort to distort what's in the legislation and that's confusing the public debate," sniffed John Rother, executive vice president of policy for the American Association of Retired People (AARP), which heartily supported the legislation.

The death panels allegation was even named Lie of the Year by a prominent web site. "Of all the falsehoods and distortions in the political discourse this year, one stood out from the rest... that the government would set up boards to determine whether seniors and the disabled were worthy of care," according to Politifact.com, which claims non-partisanship but is owned by the St. Petersburg Times, one of the most liberal newspapers in the country.

There is nothing in any of the legislative proposals that would call for the creation of death panels or any other governmental body that would cut off care for the critically ill as a cost-cutting measure," wrote The New York Times. "But over the course of the past few months, early, stated fears from anti-abortion conservatives that Mr. Obama would pursue a pro-abortion, pro-euthanasia agenda, combined with twisted accounts of actual legislative proposals that would provide financing for optional consultations with doctors about hospice care and other 'end of life' services, fed the rumor to the point where it overcame the debate."

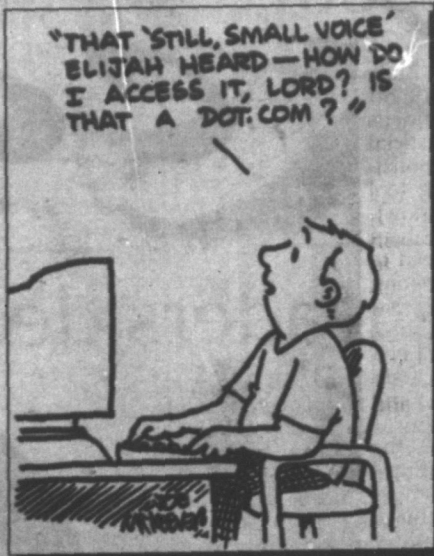
Earlier this month I had the great privilege to serve as a messenger from Sparkman First Baptist Church to the annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. What a great joy and great honor to be involved with what the Lord is doing through Arkansas Baptists.

I sense grumbings in parts of the Southern Baptist Convention about the state conventions and about the validity of their work. I have heard a few even equate current support of the state conventions with a lessened desire to share the Gospel with the nations. With that in mind, I'd like to express a few thoughts about what the Lord did in my life through our annual meeting.

First, I was reminded of the partnerships between our state conventions and the International Mission Board. Listening to the report of the Missions Ministries Team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) was moving and gave the messengers a passionate reminder of what God is doing through Arkansas Baptists all over the world and all over North America.

We were reminded of our partnership with Baptists in "frontier" states. We were reminded of our continued partnership with New Orleans

Death panels, after all



The ObamaCare monstrosity may not contain exact wording about death panels, but there's a strong implication to that effect in the law and, listening to our leading liberal intellectuals, it's only a matter of time anyway.

"Some years down the pike, we're going to get the real solution, which is going to be a combination of death panels and sales taxes," said Paul Krugman, a Noble Prize-winning economist and New York Times columnist, during a recent discussion on the state of the national economy and the constant federal budget overruns on ABC's This Week with Christiane Amanpour show.

Later on his New York Times blog, Krugman tired to walk back his comments to Amanpour. "What I meant is that health

care costs will have to be controlled..." Right. Thanks for the clarification.

Robert Reich, the secretary of labor in the Clinton Administration and one of the leading liberal lights in the country, told an audience at the University of California at Berkeley in 2009 that after the federal government implements measures that will mean "less innovation... less new products and less new drugs," they shouldn't expect to "live much longer than your parents."

"And by the way, we are going to have to — if you're very old, we're not going to give you all that technology and all those drugs for the last couple of years of your life to keep you maybe going for another couple of months. It's too expensive, so we're going to let you die," Reich said.

In many parts of what we know as Western Civilization, that's already the case. In The Netherlands, people can be euthanized against their will when they become too great a drag on that country's overburdened hospital system. In England, mothers undergo risky and unsanitary childbirth on the streets in front of hospitals because they have been denied admittance. In Oregon and other places in the U.S., one can choose assisted suicide.

Human life doesn't mean much to humans. Wars, pogroms, genocide, legalized abortion and eugenics are stark evidence of that fact. Now we have the spectre of death panels and euthanasia to add to the list. Why is that? Why are we so intent on saving whales and baby seals, while at the same time devising new and better ways to wipe as many people as possible off the face of the earth as quickly as possible?

The Bible makes it clear such is not the intent of our Creator. We are important to him, if not to ourselves. Will it be too late when we finally learn that lesson?

GUEST OPINION:



Don't discount our great state missions

By Eric Moffett
Sparkman, Ar.

and the continued recovery. We were reminded of our continued work in Haiti. We were reminded of what really makes Southern Baptists different.

Southern Baptists cooperate when it comes to missions. Our state conventions links churches, especially smaller churches, with the work of the Spirit all over the world. If anyone is confused about state conventions and international mission work, then they need to come to one of our annual meetings. They will find that support of the ABSC is support for what God is doing all over the world.

Second, I was struck by the deep desire of Arkansas Baptists to reach the people in Arkansas. I was reminded that the majority of people in Arkansas — 57%, according to the latest stats — are without Christ. Wow! Personally, I felt and still feel a deep conviction

to be more intentional about the relationships our church develops for the glory of God's kingdom, but I also came to a realization that if Arkansas is to be reached for Christ then we need each other.

We need partnership, cooperation, and the willingness of Arkansas churches to work together for the work of the Gospel. We need ways to work together like the Across Arkansas campaign coming for Easter 2011. Our goal, our commission, is to make disciples. It starts at home and Arkansas Baptists have a lot of work to do. We do that work together.

When we stand before the presence of the throne of God I have a feeling that we won't be divided by individual churches and their respective ministries.

Third, I was reminded why Southern Baptist work has been de-centralized. There are things

that happen in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention that probably wouldn't happen through a centralized national entity. I think of things like our pregnancy crisis centers, children's homes, summer camps, missions education for the church, and countless other ways that our state convention helps churches to do the work of the Gospel.

Finally, I was encouraged by the preaching of God's Word in my own life. I feel that we are at a point in our conventions (state and SBC) that we have firmly set our foundation on the Word of God and now is the time to move forward with this good theology as our centering. We can cooperate and work together. Will we choose to continue our partnership?

If you are confused about what our state convention in Arkansas actually does, begin making plans for our meeting next year. I think you will find that Arkansas Baptists are being good stewards with what God has blessed us with.

Moffett is pastor of Sparkman (Ar.) First Baptist Church and second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. The 176th Annual Session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will be held November 1-2 at First Church, Jackson.

What's in the trunk?

By Rob Chambers

Miss. Baptist Christian Action Comm.

Back in the late 1970s there was a house fire. The family was out of town, and word about the fire quickly spread. People from all over town rushed to help put the fire out.

As volunteer firefighters battled the fire, people were running in and out of the house trying to save as much as they could. The general assumption back then was that a house out in the country would burn down due to the lack of water. In this case it did, but friends were able to salvage much of the contents. Strung out all over the front yard was their furniture, clothes, pictures, artwork, china, silver, a crystal chandelier, the dirty clothes hamper, and even dirty dishes from the kitchen sink.

During perilous times those motivated by self-sacrifice seek the good will of their fellow man. But during equally perilous times there are others who succumb to human nature's tendency, out of fear and/or greed, to fight for self-preservation—even at the expense of others.

In this unstable economy our state and nation are facing significant spending cuts. But it is interesting to observe the political landscape where politicians are already succumbing to placing the interest of the



Chambers

agree to get along

Calling a truce on social issues would have been like calling for Harriet Tubman to stop her efforts to rescue slaves out of the South and Corrie ten Boom to stop her efforts to rescue Jews from the Nazis until the "greater issue" of ending the war was accomplished.

Gov. Daniels, in a separate interview, was asked if calling a truce on "social issues" meant that the next president should not push to stop taxpayer funded abortion in Obamacare or not push to reinstate the Mexico City Policy that bans federal funding of abortions overseas.

His response was that we are facing a "genuine national [budgetary] emer-

economy/dollar over the interest of social issues like abortion.

Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels-R, eyeing a bid for a 2012 presidential primary, stated in a recent interview with the Weekly Standard that the next president "would have to call a truce on the so-called social issues. We're going to just have to for a little while" until issues on the economy are resolved.

agency" and that "maybe these things [like abortion] could be set aside for a while. But this doesn't mean anybody abandons their position at all. Everybody just stands down for a little while, while we try to save the republic." (Interpretation: Stand down Harriet. Stand down Corrie. Stand down Christian.)

MS Gov. Haley Barbour-R, also said to be considering a bid for the White House, is in agreement with Gov. Daniels. Gov. Barbour said that any "issue that takes people's eye off of unemployment, job creation, economic growth, taxes, spending, deficits, debts is taking your eye off the ball."

Gov. Barbour, who has supported pro-life legislation in the past, went on to say that abortion "ain't going to change anybody's vote this year" (meaning the November 2010 elections). This was and is an egregious assumption.

Given these recent statements it is interesting to take note of a plank or part of the Republican Party platform which "says" that Republicans will be "Faithful to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence, we assert the inherent dignity and sanctity of all human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed."

Calling a truce on issues like abortion and making the claim supporting the "sanctity of all human life" is like saying one agrees that the contents from the burning house ought to be saved, but we need to focus our efforts on putting the fire out right now. This is not an either/or situation; it is both/and.

I have a trunk that was salvaged from my mother's family farm house that was destroyed by fire. It contained valuable things like their property deed and birth certificates. Apart from their lives, the trunk, a mattress, and the clothes on their back is all that was spared.

The trunk I have is now empty. What special possession could I possibly put in this trunk that would dare to compare to the God-given dignity and value of every human life—from conception to natural death?

In these tough economic times, let us hold elected officials and candidates accountable. And more so, let us not forget about the life of the unborn children who are being killed by abortion—at the rate of one every 25 seconds.

We may not be able to save the house, but while it burns we can save some.

The author can be contacted at 601-292-3331 or at rchambers@christianaction.com.

COLLEGE NEWS

1. The annual Bobby Halford Holiday Baseball Camp for youth ages 7-17 will be conducted December 29-31 on the William Carey University campus in Hattiesburg. The sessions will concentrate primarily on pitching, catching and hitting, with emphasis on fundamentals and individualized instruction. Drills and team play are utilized to fit every skill level. Evaluation and recommendation of each player is part of the three-day session. The hours are 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on December 29-30, and 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon on December 31. Cost is \$110, which includes instruction, camp T-shirt, and two noon meals. Instructors include Carey coaches and area scouts under the direction of Coach Halford. The Carey Crusaders are one of the top NAIA teams in the country. For more information, call the baseball office, (601) 318-6110, or the office of external relations, (601) 318-6192, or write Bobby Halford Baseball Camp, William Carey University, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401, or email bhalford@wmcarey.edu.

2. The Mississippi Art Education Association recently gave one of its top honors to Randy Miley, the chairman of the Mississippi College Art Department. An MC professor since 1999, Miley was named the organization's higher education art educator of the year for 2010-2011. Miley has served as a member of the statewide association since 1975 and worked ever since to promote art education throughout the South.



2. Miley

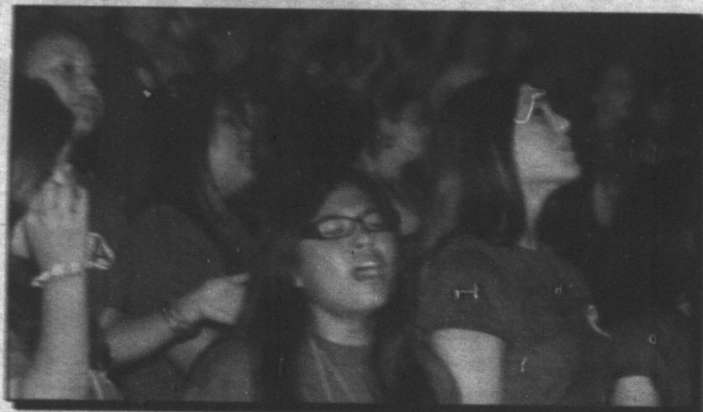
Blume Orlando registration now open

ORLANDO, FL. (BP) — Several thousand teen girls and collegiate young women will gather for Blume, a four-day focus on missions, next July at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, FL.

Blume, a Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) event held every four or five years, will include hands-on ministry projects; interaction with missionaries; worship, Bible studies, and breakout sessions; and an interactive cultural activity in Epcot customized for Blume through Disney's Youth Education Series program.

Chandra Feele, a Christian speaker and author from Cypress, Texas, will be the keynote speaker for Blume. "Chandra has a real heart for students and is someone the girls will immediately connect with," said Suzanne Reece, a Blume coordinator and WMU ministry consultant. "She is a strong woman of God and a very effective motivator, encourager and communicator of biblical truths."

Blume 2011's biblical emphasis will be based on 2 Timothy 1:3-14, with verse 7 as the focus: "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."



PRAISING THE LORD — More than 3,000 teenage girls and young women gathered in mid-July in Kansas City, Mo., for Blume, a national conference sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union. (BP photo)

Registration is now open for the July 13-16 gathering. Early bird registration through April 30, 2011, is \$299 per person if staying within the Blume block of reserved rooms or \$399 per person if reservations are made outside the Blume block. Starting May 1, registration fees will be \$349 per person inside the reserved Blume block of rooms or \$449 outside the Blume block.

Registration can be completed online, by telephone, fax, or mail. Girls do not have to be involved in Acolytes to attend Blume. The event is open to all girls ages 12-17 and young women who are in college or are college age. For more information on Blume, visit www.blumeforgirls.com. For sponsorship, advertising, and exhibiting options, contact David George at dgeorge@wmu.org, or go to www.blumeforgirls.com.

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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FNAYKC UYZH LK NUQ
HDI YM NAYJGZQ; DKH
UQ VKYEQU NUQO
NUDN NAJFN LK ULO.

KDUJO YKQ: FQXQX

Clue: N = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-two: Thirty-two

PRAYING FOR LEADERS

In Paul's letter to Timothy, he encourages Timothy to be faithful in an area of ministry often overlooked: praying for leaders, for people in authority, and for people in a position of influence. In 1 Tim. 2:1-3, he calls all of us to pray for all of them. In 2011, thousands of people across our state will be praying every morning before 8 o'clock. One of the things we must do is to pray for servants. They may be community servants, church servants, state or national leaders, or possibly those in places of leadership and influence in our schools.

I think it is of great significance and vitally important that Paul begins his call to prayer for these people in authority by first asking that we pray for everybody. Do not run past that and do not overlook that. No doubt, there will be individuals and needs that God will bring to your prayer life that involve people you know and others with whom you may not be very familiar. When He does, take the time to focus on praying for them because of your awareness of leaders or unawareness of what may be going on in their lives. The decisions they make and the lives they live have a large circle of influence and impact, so pray for them. You may or may not know them personally. You may or may not agree with all of their political, cultural, economic, or theological views, but pray for them.

Why should you pray for them? One reason is that they are people. Paul mentions kings and people who are in authority and says that we need to pray, "That we may lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." As you see these folks in the public arena, do not forget that each one of them has a personal and private life that God can bless and influence. When He does, that in itself leads to greater possibilities of them thinking clearly, not living in emotional distress, and being able to process decisions dealing with issues and even crises in a far better way.



Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

While we may observe and think that we have bad leaders in some positions, if we as God's people prayed as we ought to, it might help them to be better leaders. Through the years, I have had the privilege of knowing some community and state leaders in a personal way. When I see their public persona and their leadership stance, I may be aware of some unseen issue that is of major significance with which they are dealing and probably think about every moment of the day. It may be a family crisis of which no one is aware, or it could be a health issue about which they do not talk. Like all of the rest of us, they have the day-to-day personal struggles that call for their attention and can potentially drain their emotional and mental reservoirs.

Each year as our state legislators come together to begin the process of the several months of legislative work here in Mississippi, I commit to them that I will be praying for them throughout the session — and I do. Sometimes the legislative process looks more like a meat grinder because not only do they face the struggle with the issues, but they also face personal attacks and counterattacks that are going on often in the media and lived out in high visibility. Many of these men and women who ran for office, and drive long distances to come to serve, are away from their families for

long periods of time. They miss children's activities, grandchildren's sporting events, meeting family needs, and celebrations while serving our state. The point is, let us pray for them.

That same thing is true for all of our leaders. As you pray for servants, I would encourage you to pray for your pastor. While oftentimes people think that they know everything about their pastor, his work, and his life both public and private, they do not. I have often said that if a pastor is doing what he is supposed to do and thoughtfully and discreetly caring for the sheep and seeing after his flock, probably three-fourths of what he is doing will never be noticed. He may be quietly helping someone that would be terribly embarrassed if his or her situation was known, and he does not have

the prerogative to tell it. His personal devotional time and preparation to bring a word from God Sunday after Sunday — and often three or four times during the week — takes place in an arena that few people ever have the opportunity to see. There is also the unending struggle for him to be the husband, father, and grandfather that he would love to be. Sometimes he carries the burden of awkwardness and even guilt that he missed some of the events of his children or to meet the desires of his family. Pray diligently, meaningfully, and caring for your pastor and you may be surprised at how much better he will be.

As you pray for this one particular area of servants that affects your life and our world, hold them up to the Father and allow Him to lead you to significant people. He will place on your heart. The list may become long and the needs may become great, but you can make a difference in their lives while God is making a difference in your prayer life.

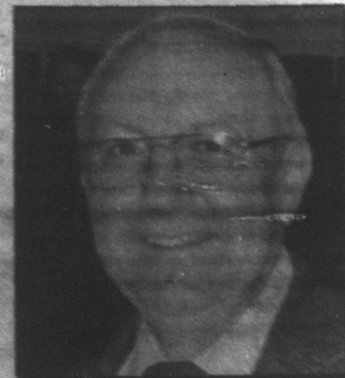
The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. **First Church, Hickory Flat:** Church history celebration, Nov. 19 - 21; Fri. and Sat., 6 - 8:30 p.m.; Sun., 9 - 11:30 a.m.; includes concert singing, testimonies, history presentation; finger foods Fri. - Sat.; Thanksgiving meal Sun. Jim Futral, Roy Bostick, and Horace Thomas, speakers.
2. **Hollywood Church, North Delta:** 100th anniversary and harvest day, Nov. 21; services, 10 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Jim Henry, speaker; Roy Hartzell, pastor.

STAFF CHANGES

1. **Wade Church, Wade,** has called Everett Childers as pastor, effective Oct. 31.
2. **First Church, Tremont,** has called Matthew Russell as pastor. He was installed as pastor Oct. 31. Shown are transitional pastor Ken Anderson and his wife Judy, and Marley Russell and Russell.



1. Childers



2. The Andersons and the Russells

MS POSITIONS

THE MUSIC SEARCH COMMITTEE of First Baptist Coldwater is seeking a part-time Worship Leader. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 347, Coldwater, MS 38618 or fbcoldwater@bellsouth.net.

MAGNOLIA BAPTIST CHURCH in Laurel MS is looking for a Bi Vocational Minister of Music. Please send resume to: Magnolia Baptist Church, 1040 Wansley Rd., Laurel MS 39440.

SAND HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Attala Association is seeking a bi vocational Minister to Students. Send resumes to Sammy Yates 107 Cavalier Drive Kosciusko Ms 39090.

HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH IN Senatobia MS is seeking a part-time Minister of Students to work with Youth and College age. If interested, please email resume to pastorhbc@bellsouth.net.

ENON BAPTIST CHURCH, GRENADA, MS is accepting resumes for a bi-vocational Minister of Music. Please send resumes and references to: Jerry Boyette, Chairman, Music Search Committee, 2879 CR 286, Grenada, MS 38901.

STAFF POSITION ENTERPRISE Baptist Church in Enterprise, MS is accepting resumes for a Full-time Minister of Students. Please send resumes to: enterprisebaptist@att.net OR Enterprise Baptist Church, C/O Minister of Students Search P.O. Box 186 Enterprise, MS 39330.

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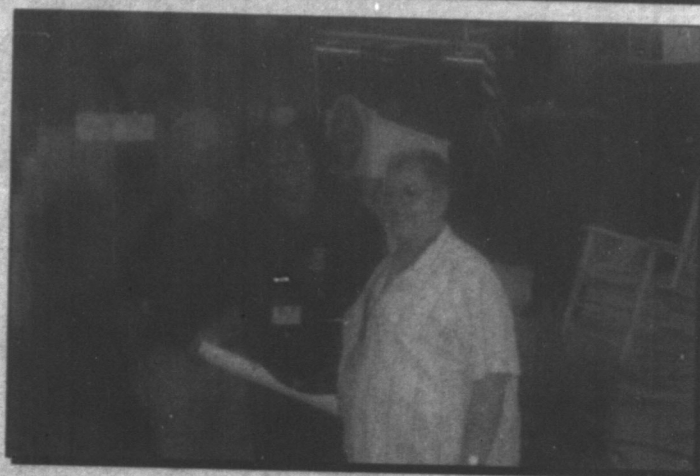
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12. Cedar Grove Church, Columbia

12. The Golden Friends of Cedar Grove Church, Columbia, enjoyed a Tacky Party Oct. 30. Shown are the participants.

13. The Mississippi Campers on Mission received the 2010 Honor Chapter Banner in Dequoin, Ill., in June. The Mississippi group won the banner for small chapters (less than 150 members) nationwide. The group recorded 130 events, 26 rigs participating, with 7,153 hours donated and 41 professions of faith. Shown are national director Randy Creamer; Edith Youngblood, state secretary; and Beverly Ellis, vice-president.



13. Campers on Mission recognition

Conference focuses on importance of Sunday School

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — "If Sunday School isn't good, isn't worth the time, how can we expect people to come back?"

It's a crucial question, said Art Groomes, one of the speakers at the National Black Sunday School Conference sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

About 250 pastors, church Sunday School directors, leaders, and teachers from across the United States — and even one from Bermuda — attended the sessions at LifeWay's home office in Nashville.

Groomes, bivocational pastor of First Family Church in Antioch, Tenn., underscored the importance of great expectations for Sunday School in sessions he led for conference veterans.

"People of faith need to be people of great expectations," Groomes said. In their Sunday Schools, he said, they should "expect new people every week; expect people to say 'yes' when asked to participate; and expect classes to grow and reproduce as every healthy thing does."

Achieving great expectations entails planning for good things

to happen, especially having teachers who are prepared with the lesson, Groomes said. "You never know when someone will show up for the very first time to Sunday School, someone you never expected to see," he said.

"You have to have thought it through before they get there. Is there fresh coffee made? Are there enough chairs? Are there people there to greet them? Are there enough books and extra Bibles? Are there people who will ask them to sit with them?"

Follow-up also is crucial, Groomes said. "Follow up with a phone call or visit that very day," he said. "At least don't let it be more than a couple of days. Answer their questions. Ask them to join you for a meal."

"For many new people in Sunday School, it's never as much about the place as it is about relationships," Groomes said. "Help them feel like Sunday School is a safe place, a place they are wanted, a place they are loved."

Elgia "Jay" Wells, director of LifeWay's black church relations area, told the leaders that Sunday School is the best way to help people get involved in a church.

"They come into your Sunday School and you let them know they are welcome and important,"

Wells said. "They like that. Then, you invite them to your worship service where the pastor supports the Sunday School."

Wells introduced Mark Croston Sr., pastor of East End Church in Suffolk, Va., calling him a Sunday School-loving pastor. "If you want to see what a Sunday School pastor looks like, look at Mark Croston," Wells said.

Croston, reiterating that Sunday School is where relationships are formed, encouraged participants to look for people who are wounded and carrying guilt and shame.

"Time doesn't necessarily heal all wounds," Croston said. "Sometimes the wounds are self-inflicted. Sometimes they fester because we don't appropriately deal with them. At the same time, sometimes guilt can just weigh us down. We groan; we're weak. We feel completely overwhelmed by our sin."

Sunday School leaders and members can offer the touch that helps healing begin, Croston said. "Just love on these people," he said. "Help them out."

Participants at the Oct. 22-23 conference had the opportunity to choose from 35 sessions in addition to a large group track for conference veterans and one for new attendees.

Topics included the nuts and bolts of choosing effective Bible study curricula for Sunday School classes; learning how to teach for transformation; age-specific helps on teens in Sunday School; media technology; and developing an effective adult outreach team.



LIFTING UP THE LORD — Gwen "Ms Chocolate" Williams, worship leader from Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans, leads a time of worship at the National Black Sunday School Conference held in late October in Nashville. (BP photo)

David Francis, director of Sunday School at LifeWay, in leading a session on Teaching for Life Change, highlighted three facets of teaching in a way that leads to life change in individuals, "three intertwined facets [that] are part of every great Bible study experience":

- Scripture: "The Bible is the textbook for our Sunday Schools," Francis said, while curriculum is a means to teaching the Bible in a comprehensive, focused, and theologically appropriate way.

- The key to discovery teaching and learning is asking questions. Asking questions is a learning method that is appropriate for all ages and learning styles."

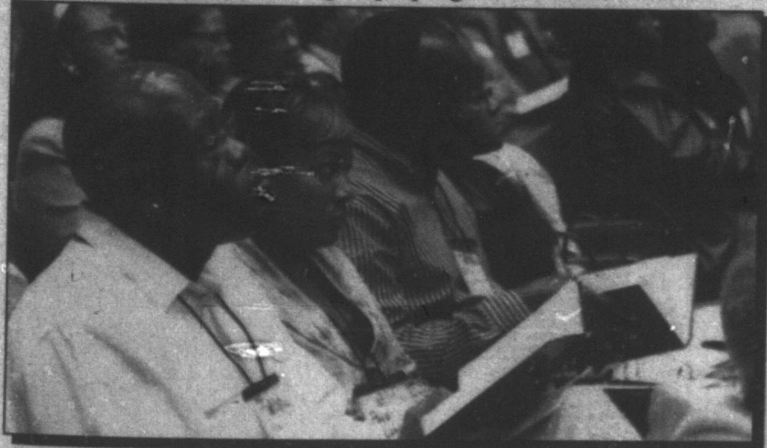
- Story: "People don't just 'have' a story; they 'are' a story," Francis said, noting that stories help connect experience with Scripture. To discover someone's story, ask "What's your story? How does your story intersect with God's story?"

Jesus is the perfect example of a storyteller, Francis noted. "If you look at how He answered questions, many times it was not with a direct answer, but with a story, a parable. This led people to discover the answer to their own questions."

- Shepherding: "People need to be led; there is security in knowing that someone is looking out for them," Francis said, describing shepherding as the 24/7/365 ministry of Sunday School.

"As a Sunday School teacher or leader, you need to know your sheep, your flock," he said. "Just like the Good Shepherd, you may have to go out of your way to locate a missing one."

Free downloads for Sunday School leaders and teachers are available at LifeWay.com/SundaySchool. Next year's National Black Sunday School Conference will be Oct. 28-29 at LifeWay in Nashville.



SUNDAY SCHOOL PROMOTION — Listening to a sermon by Virginia pastor Mark Croston, participants at the National Black Sunday School Conference Oct. 22-23 in Nashville learned that Sunday School is where relationships are formed and people who are wounded can find help. (BP photo)

JUST FOR THE RECORD



4. Antioch Church, Union



5. Park Haven Church, Laurel



6. Sylvarena Church, Wesson



7. Blackledge and the Neals



1. Slayden Church, Slayden, recently held a silent auction to raise funds for the church benevolence fund, with \$3500 raised through the auction and sale of home-made stew, red beans and rice, and desserts.

2. Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, will present the Glory of Christmas: Keyboards and Carols Dec. 5, 3 p.m.

3. Holly Springs Church, Foxworth, will observe the Hanging of the Green Nov. 28, 10 a.m. Ron Jordan, pastor.

4. Antioch Church, Union, attended Glory Days Youth Camp in Benton, Tenn., in July. Shown are the participants.

5. Members of Park Haven Church, Laurel, collected and distributed over 150 coats to those in need of a coat for the winter. Coats still available. Shown are the participants.

6. Sylvarena Church, Wesson, ordained deacons serving in leadership positions. Shown are Jimmy Buffin, Van Britt, Brian Letchworth, Bob Carraway, Jerry Westbrooks, Jerry Carter, and Buddy Boyd.

7. First Church, Quitman, presented pastor Gene Neal and his wife Linda a plaque of appreciation for completing 10 years of service. Shown are Fred Blackledge and the Neals.

8. Fellowship Church, Starkville, honored pastor Dickie Bryan and his wife Donna with a reception and money tree during Pastor Appreciation Month. Shown are the Bryans.

9. Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol, ordained Daniel Ogletree and commissioned Ogletree and Brandon Jones as deacons Sept. 19. Shown are Jones, J. Clark, and Ogletree.

10. Central Church, Lincoln Association, ordained David Dunn as deacon. Shown are pastor Ryan Thurman, Dunn, and Mike McKee.

11. Temple Church, Mendenhall, recognized their pastor, Jack Woodard, and his wife Clara with a luncheon, celebrating their five year anniversary at the church. Shown are the Woodards.



8. The Bryans



9. Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol



10. Central Church, Lincoln Association



11. The Woodards

IMB budgeting to keep 5,000 missionaries on field

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists are seeking to deploy as many missionaries worldwide as resources will allow, amid reductions in personnel due to lower Cooperative Program receipts and the U.S. recession.

The International Mission Board (IMB) interim president, Clyde Meador, told the Southern Baptist TEXAN he expects the anticipated end-of-year missionary count of 5,000 to be maintained into next year.

With 57 new long-term missionaries appointed in the latest commissioning service Nov. 10 in North Carolina, the number of IMB personnel serving around the world will total 5,189. Attrition through short-term personnel completing their two- and three-year terms, career personnel retirements, and the routine resignation by about five percent of the force will cause that number to decline by the year's end, combined with budget restraints that had already been put in place to lower the number of new personnel appointed.

Meador expressed great enthusiasm at the depth of commitment among new recruits. "There's something about these young 20-somethings who exhibit a deeper commitment than I've ever seen," he observed.

Totals down

In years past, Southern Baptists appointed between 850 and 900 personnel annually, but the process has slowed in light of economic projections to this year's level of about 550 new long- and short-term missionaries.

To blame all of that on the economy would be inaccurate, Meador told the TEXAN. In addition, he said, individual Southern Baptists need to evaluate whether they are giving as much as they should.

IMB chairman Jimmy Pritchard of Forney, Texas, echoed that theme in his report

at the trustees' September meeting in Tampa, FL., stating, "The issue is not that we [Southern Baptists] can't afford it, but that we just don't want to foot the bill. What will solve our problem is a good dose of spiritual awakening in our churches."

Meador, asked by the TEXAN whether the board is still appointing full-time career missionaries, said, "We do continue to send new personnel — lots of them — each year, but not as many as we would like to send."

Long-term personnel remain the priority, though the budget constraints required a cutback "from the usual 400 or so new long-term folks" to this year's target of 300.

Two factors caused the projected number of new career personnel deployed in 2010 to dip even further to about 250: the inability of many candidates to sell their houses, and an over-adjustment in the appointment process for those who were in the pipeline.

"We overdid it" in restricting the career missionary appointments, said Meador, explaining the difficulty of projecting anticipated income while at the same time deciding how many prospective personnel should advance toward appointment, both of which must be decided over a year in advance.

Having to sell a house before a missionary appointment is approved delays many qualified candidates. "Three or four couples are delayed for that reason at every appointment service," Meador said. "One of the couples appointed... in Tampa had waited two years for their house to sell."

Countering misperception

"Still, we are clearly sending out long-term missionaries," Meador said, countering the misperception that global evangelism efforts have been shut down by a lack of resources. When the IMB sees an increase in giving to the Cooperative Program combined with a rise in Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, consideration can be



APPOINTED — Cahary Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., hosted the most recent International Mission Board (IMB) appointment service on Nov. 10. Trustees approved 57 new missionaries who are being sent out among all eight of the IMB's primary global affinity groups, encompassing the world's 11,000-plus known people groups. IMB officials said they hope to maintain the current number of missionaries in the field — about 5,000 — while drawing down stateside employees. (BP photo)

given to increasing the headcount to pre-recession levels.

"If finances continue to fall, we might have to reduce that further which we do not want to do," Meador said. While making career personnel a priority, significant cuts have been made among short-term personnel. Typically, short-term personnel include:

- **Journeymen:** 20-something college graduates who can commit to two years of international cross-cultural missionary service.

- **International Service Corps:** singles, couples and young families who can commit to two to three years.

- **Masters:** single or married, these over-50 missionaries meet a particular need and commit to two to three years of service.

Budget cutbacks in recent years led to suspension of the International Service Corps and Masters programs with the exception of missions degree programs offered through some Southern Baptist seminaries and appointment of short-termers to meet critical needs where long-term personnel are not available.

The number of journeymen being deployed has been cut in half from 200 to 100 new missionaries each year.

Despite having to reduce the mission force from 5,656 to 5,000 over the course of 2009-10, Meador said newly deployed missionaries are "the cream of the crop."

"In fact, 65% of the journeymen we've deployed recently said, 'I'm in it for the long haul,' intending to eventually return as career missionaries once their two years are over. The young people we're sending out are sold out."

No reduction has been made in the appointment of seminar-

ians who finish their degrees on the mission field. "We're sending all that the seminaries can give us," Meador said.

Southwestern Seminary, for example, has 80 students enrolled in that program, allowing interested students an opportunity to speed up the process of heading to the field.

Requirements

Requirements for appointment through the IMB remain higher than most mission-sending organizations. Applicants are screened for doctrinal fidelity and given background checks related to financial integrity, standards of morality and emotional, physical, and mental health.

They must be between the ages of 21 and 50 years of age at the time of appointment, never divorced, active members of a Southern Baptist church, and trained and involved in personal evangelism.

In addition to selling any house they might own, prospective missionaries must eliminate debt. Most career candidates in church planting, evangelism, and theological education must complete a graduate-level seminary degree and enter a 36-month apprenticeship term before being approved for long-term service.

Spouses must complete 15 hours of similar coursework in addition to at least 60 hours of bachelor's-level studies. Assignments in business, medical, agriculture, and education require 20 hours of graduate-level biblical, theological and missiological studies.

Meador expressed concern that the false impression that Southern Baptists can't afford to send out more missionaries might prompt some young people to turn to independent-

ly funded avenues for service or encourage churches to put such para-church ministries in their budget to the neglect of the more traditional approach of supporting the Cooperative Program which, along with the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) contributions, keep the 5,000-plus IMB personnel on the field.

"They need to understand what they're saying no to when they say yes to something else," Meador said. Now is not the time for churches to reduce their Cooperative Program giving, he reminded.

Missions season

As churches head into a season of promoting the world missions offering, the IMB can assist in making stateside personnel available to speak to congregations. This year's theme of *Are We There Yet?* shares the challenge of finishing the task of reaching the 4,743 people groups not yet engaged with the Gospel and the 6,426 unreached people groups (those with less than two percent of people who profess to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ).

Promotional materials were mailed to every church in September, with more information available at imb.org or by calling (800) 999-3113.

Among the other adjustments that made it possible for IMB to cut its 2010 operating budget by about seven percent were a hiring freeze at the board's offices in Richmond, Va.; slicing the IMB retirement contribution amount in half to five percent with a matching contribution of three percent; changes in co-pays for medical insurance; and eliminating salary increases for all personnel.

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Former homosexual reaches out to others like him

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP) — "Maybe you are attracted to men like I am, and you wonder if God loves you."

That's how Jonathan Ervin, a former practicing homosexual, begins a video titled, *Does God Love Gay People?* The video is posted at TrueLife.org, a website which offers numerous videos of theological experts relaying biblical answers to many moral and cultural issues.

Whether God loves homosexuals may not matter to some "because you don't believe in God or maybe you just don't care what God thinks," Ervin, a 1980 graduate of Liberty University, says in the video. "These conclusions have probably been made because of poor examples of cruel people who profess to love God. They've held up signs that insult and demonize gays and lesbians."

"Well, I know now more than ever that those people are misguided and bigoted. If anyone truly loves God, they would know that you're supposed to treat your neighbor as yourself. The true answer to our question, 'Does God love you if you're gay,' is, 'Yes,'" Ervin says in a narrative between clips of Liberty professors who provide a theological foundation to support his answer.

"God made us, and He knows what is best for us," Ervin states. "The Bible says not to lie, not to steal, not to lust, and these commands were not put in place to keep you from having fun; they are to protect you."

People can benefit from "every teaching in the Bible," he notes. "Think of all the trouble you have gotten into when you have followed temptation and not done the right thing," Ervin states. "Does the temptation make it right? No, it doesn't. Just because you are tempted to do something doesn't mean that it is what is best for you."

Darren Wu, professor of contemporary issues at Liberty, notes in his clip, "God established boundaries for us because He loves us, including very clear boundaries on the expression of our sexuality."

Wu cites a list of sins found in Leviticus 18.6-16 — incest, group sex, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality — and points out that similar lists are found in the New Testament. "I think it's important for us to note that while this list mentions homosexual behavior, it is not listed first," Wu states, "and it is not singled out as something worse than the others. It is merely one of many distortions of

sex" not intended by God for His human creations.

Ervin recounts that while engaging in homosexual behaviors "I knew deep down that I was not doing what Jesus would want me to, and I had a deep suspicion that I was going to pay for it." Diagnosed with full-blown AIDS, Ervin states that he might die at any time.

No longer seeking love and acceptance through homosexuality, Ervin said, "I have a relationship with Christ that I only previously read about in a book." Ervin's journey away from homosexuality and into a relationship with Jesus Christ is chronicled in a book he's written titled, *My Secret Place: Living with AIDS & Addiction — A Man Who Gave Up Homosexuality for God*.

Ervin says he believes God continues to give him health so he can share the hope offered by Jesus and also warn practicing homosexuals of the dangers they face. The video includes statistical data of such dangers as:

- a 4,000% increase in anal cancer for those engaging in homosexual intercourse; double that for those who are HIV-positive.
- AIDS is the fifth-leading cause of death among those aged 26-44, the vast majority of

new cases are contracted by men who have sex with men.

- life expectancy lowered by anywhere from 10-30 years.

Will Honeycutt, also a professor of contemporary issues at Liberty, cites columnist and gay advocate Andrew Sullivan, who "acknowledges that, even as homosexuality gains greater and greater social acceptance, 'death is still a major concern to the homosexual.'"

In fact, Sullivan says, death is intrinsic to the gay lifestyle, that "for gay men in America ... death is less an event than an environment."

The TrueLife.org video points viewers to Jesus Christ as the answer to souls sickened with sin. "I think if you are honest with yourself, you will admit that sex has neither ful-

filled your innermost needs nor healed your deepest hurts," Honeycutt states. "I may be wrong, but I believe that as long as you pursue sex, money, status or anything else, instead of the God who made you, you will continue to experience emptiness in life."

The video clearly sets forth how to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. "Become a Christian," Ervin says. "The transition to a new way of life won't be easy, but it will be worth it. You will be amazed at how the Holy Spirit will help you overcome temptation, and you will never regret following God. You were made for Him."

Editor's note: For more information about Jonathan Ervin, go to www.jonathanervin.com.

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

The Case for the Christian Life: Life Together

Acts 2:41-47; Hebrews 10:23-25

By Rick Henson

The First Century church powerfully represented Christ to Israel and beyond. Acts 2:41-47 states, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. ... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," (KJV).

Sadly, few contemporary churches resemble the early church, and few exhibit the power of the Holy Spirit as did they. Modern evangelical churches focus more on those in atten-

dance than those outside the church walls. People were saved daily in the New Testament church.

Today we recognize any church that reaches one or two a week as setting the pace in evangelism. Few churches in the entire Southern Baptist Convention baptize more than one person a day on average. Only two churches in our State Convention come close to that. Most baptize a few a year, much less a week.

How can we expect lost people to come to our churches if we are not doing what God calls us to do? The early church had favor with all people, had gladness and singleness of heart, and represented Christ daily in the Temple. Few contemporary churches resemble the First Century Church. After thirty-five years as a pastor of Southern Baptist Churches, I believe I know why many churches today are not New Testament churches.



Henson

Many churches today are **Members-Only** churches. Those churches are not interested in new members, only in keeping the ones they already have. Members-Only church members make it clear that the church is a closed society. This church says, "It's us four and no more." These churches do not have visitation, are only interested in the children of members being saved, and rarely support any mission causes. They usually give to the Cooperative Program and take an offering for Lottie Moon, but never reach out to anyone. Members-Only churches do not represent Christ to the world, and do not resemble the New Testament church.

I served as pastor of one of these. A lady actually told me that she did not care about anyone outside the church, as long as her needs were met. I asked her, "What about the great Commission?" She answered that she did not care what the Bible said. She was happy with whom we already had at church. End of discussion.

Other churches are **Visitors-Only** churches. These churches welcome visitors to church services. They love to have guests, as long as they remain guests. The visitors may actually join the church, but will not have any leadership positions for at least a decade or two. These positions are reserved for the long-term membership only. These churches wouldn't let an outsider lead in silent prayer, much less give up a position on a church committee to a new person. I served as the pastor of a few of these as well. Outsiders were welcome, but they would stay outsiders. Visitors-Only churches do not represent Christ to the world, and do not resemble the New Testament church.

Other churches are **Whosoever-Will-May-Come** churches. These represent Christ to the world and are more like the First Century Christian church. These churches welcome new members gladly and make room for them. They recognize that God saves people and not the church. They understand that serving God is a gift from God and not to be kept from anyone. These church members seek people outside the church, praying

that they will be saved; welcome them into the church, praying that God will make them into disciples; and happily work beside the new believers to reach more for Christ. The Whosoever-Will-May-Come church members practice Galatians 3:28, which reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," (KJV). They obey the Luke 14:23 where the Lord said, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled," (KJV).

Which best describes your church? Members-Only, Visitors-Only, or Whosoever-Will-May-Come? You can make a difference. If every member of my church were just like me, what type of church would my church be? The New Testament Church attracted people, was used by God to change lives, and changed the world. The 21st Century Church can do the same by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's let Him do it.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Being Respectful

Ephesians 6: 1-9

By Melleen Moore

Making the choice to be respectful for the believer should be rather easy. Being made in God's image, having the examples of Jesus and being taught in the scripture are foundational for 'being respectful'. These actions of respect bring joy to living in the spirit causing us to lift our head a little higher and broaden our smile a little wider. Jesus put this in perspective when he said, "Whatever you want others to do to you, do also the same for them" (Matthew 7: 12, HCSB).

Respect for Parents

Ephesians 6:1-3

The audience is children and the command is to obey. The scripture gives some examples of reasons for showing respect. Warren Wiersbe (The Bible Exposition Commentary, New

Testament, Volume 2, pages 52-53) says it this way. The first of four examples is walking "in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1, HCSB)—the desire of the believer's heart to please God. The second example is "because it is right" (Ephesians 6:1, HCSB)—from the goodness of a spirit-filled heart. Example number three is calling for "honor" identifying it as the "first commandment with a promise" (Ephesians 6: 2, HCSB). Honor is to show love with respect which includes caring for parents as needed. This honor should reflect on both the care giver and the recipient. The fourth example speaks of the promise for obedience "it will go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land" (Ephesians 6:3, HCSB). This pictures two



Moore

blessings from obedience: 'go well'—happiness and peace and 'live long'—life not shortened by danger and sin. The phrase 'in the land' as cited in the fifth commandment in the Old Testament—Exodus 20:12 refers to the children of Israel as they entered the promised land of Canaan. A few years back there was a popular question, 'What would Jesus do?' This is an aptly question to ask regarding respect for parents. It could be answered with 'doing the will of the Heavenly Father' an example set by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Respect of Children

Ephesians 6:4

The audience is 'fathers' referring to both parents. Paul suggests a negative—"don't stir up anger" and a positive "bring them up" (Ephesians 6: 4, HCSB) in giving instructions for raising children. The negative 'don't' is a warning to pre-

vent harshness in anger. Stop short of provoking a child causing him to be disobedient. The positive is to train or instruct as God would—both discipline and nurturing. Consistent and loving correction brings assurance and confidence while nurturing instills a positive self image and good physical, mental and spiritual health with the desire to please both parents and God.

Respect for Employers

Ephesians 6: 5-8

Although employers may have been strange terminology in the days of Paul, it addresses the situation as owners of slaves. The make-up of the church included slaves so Paul addresses his audience as 'slaves'. Although slavery was an accepted practice, it commonly meant mistreatment of the individual. Paul's emphasis is for the slave to honor God in his actions and attitude with "sincerity of your heart, as to Christ" (Ephesians 6: 5, HCSB). Specifically, the believer—slave or free—is to be a Christian wherever and in

whatever situation—watched or working alone. God sees and knows, so our work is to be pleasing to Him with a good attitude "as to the Lord" (Ephesians 6:7, HCSB).

Respect for Workers

Ephesians 6: 9

The audience is 'masters' calling for treatment with kindness and equality. There should be no threatening between employer and employee as they have the same "Master" who is in heaven. A believer is a Christian first whether in the role of employer or employee, so actions should reflect the image of God. In the words of the old hymn, More Like The Master, by Charles Gabriel the believer is reminded to keep the focus on Christ our Lord. "More like the Master, I would ever be, More of His meekness, more humility; More zeal to labor, more courage to be true, More consecration for work He bids me do."

Moore is a member of Macedonia Church, Petal.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

OCTOBER, 2010 HONORS

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Sharon & Herman Dungan
Mary Morgan Dungan
Sharon & Herman Dungan
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Mrs. Agnes Barsdale
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Employment Opportunity

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff. They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregiver and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty. Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment. An application is available at-

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com
or may be requested from Celeste Cade at
ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or 601-922-2242.

Thanksgiving & Christmas Food Needs

The Baptist Children's Village is getting ready for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. As we prepare for these special days we ask that you consider helping us with our holiday grocery list. The following items may be collected and donated to one of The Baptist Children's Village campuses.

Please contact the campus nearest you to schedule delivery. Farrow Manor Campus (Independence) 662-233-2155; Reedy Acres Campus (Water Valley) 662-473-3717; Ramey Cottage (Nanih Waiya) 662-552-0830; Powell-Walley Campus (Waynesboro) 662-552-0830; Dickerson Place Campus (Brookhaven) 601-833-8104 and Deanash Campus (Wiggins) 601-928-4599. For more information and assistance please contact Celeste Cade at 601-922-2242 or ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

- Turkeys
- Canned Vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, etc.)
- Cranberry Sauce
- Chicken broth
- Stuffing
- Cake Mixes
- Brownie and other dessert mixes
- Flour
- Chocolate, Butterscotch & Peanut Butter Chips
- Cornbread & muffin mixes
- Tea bags
- Kool-Aid
- Sugar

Bad boy turned life around, sacrificed it for country

LATHROP, Mo. (BP) — Issac Jackson spoke at his home church every time he came back home on leave from Fort Lewis, Wa. When he returned to duty, he was a witness for Christ every day on the battlefield leading up his death in Afghanistan on Oct. 27, 2009.

Jackson was five months into his second tour of duty in Kandahar when he and six of his seven crew members were killed after an improvised explosive device (IED) struck their vehicle. He served as the commander of a Stryker, an eight-wheeled armored mash-up of a tank and a Humvee.

His battalion on his first tour, based out of Fort Drum, N.Y., suffered heavy casualties. His was to be the first Stryker brigade deployed to Afghanistan, and his wife Kristen said he knew before he left that his unit likely would suffer similar losses.

Even though Jackson left behind a baby boy, Enoch, who is now 2, and a daughter, Eden, born six weeks after his death, Kristen said she knows he died doing his duty for his country and, more importantly, for his Lord. "He spoke of his 'ministry in the military,'" she said. "He was constantly having debates with the guys and they were always starting arguments on God, Christianity, or evolution and stuff like that."

Since he was an infantryman and served on the front lines, he was surrounded mostly by men with anti-Christian attitudes. "It's pretty rare to find godly men in the military; they're few and far between," Kristen said. "He was kind of a lone ranger when it came to being a Christian. He had no problem telling people what he believed."

Jackson was the youngest of three brothers. His father was killed when he was only 18 months old and, in Kristen's words, "he wasn't a good kid."

"I asked him one time, 'Why were you so bad?'" she recounted. "He was just angry. He got better — legally at least — as he got a little older."



FAITHFUL — Sgt. Issac Jackson, who died Oct. 27, 2009, while commanding a Stryker fighting vehicle in Afghanistan that struck an IED (improvised explosive device), was known for being bold about his Christian faith. Six members of his team were also killed in the explosion. (BP photo)

It wasn't until Jackson accepted Christ just before his 22nd birthday that he made up for not having an earthly father by accepting his heavenly Father. He joined First Church in Lathrop, Mo., where he was discipled by the church's music minister, Donnie Quinn.

Though Kristen accepted Christ as her Savior at the age of five, she "got totally off track" in high school. When

they connected through their church in the small community north of Kansas City, they began their discipleship journey together.

Issac and Kristen began dating in March 2004, and he enlisted in the Army the following May. They were engaged five months later and married Dec. 18, 2004.

"We came back to Jesus at the same time," Kristen said. "We provided good

accountability for each other. Even when he was stationed somewhere, we were good for each other in that."

Even now, a year after his death, Issac's faith is making a difference. "I've had a couple of soldiers find me on Facebook and tell me about the talks they had with Issac about God and Jesus," Kristen said. "They said that talking with him changed their opinions of God and Christians."

Black Hawk Down chaplain: be willing to risk all for Jesus Christ



GO — Army chaplain Jeff Struecker, of Black Hawk Down fame, urges Southeastern Seminary students in Wake Forest, N.C., on Oct. 27 to pray, telling God, "Give me the most difficult mission and I'll go, knowing You will be faithful to me." (BP photo)

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — As a chaplain in the U.S. Army, Major Jeff Struecker said he admires those like Caleb who are willing to risk it all.

The decorated chaplain, who was depicted in the movie Black Hawk Down in the battle of Mogadishu, Somalia, was the guest speaker in chapel Oct. 27 at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Struecker spoke on the example of Caleb, preaching from Joshua 14:6-15 recounting Caleb's request to move into the promised land. "I'm a fan of men and women who are willing to risk it all for Jesus Christ," Struecker said. Noting that Caleb and Joshua were the only two who had enough faith to desire to move into the Promised Land, Struecker said believers likewise must "practice faith if you're going to learn to risk it all."

This is what Joshua and Caleb had been doing since first seeking to go into the Promised Land against the advice of 10 of their companions, Struecker said. "Joshua and Caleb were the only two men who had the kind of faith to say, 'Our God is big enough,'" the chaplain said.

"You can't say you've exercised your faith until you've stepped into the dark and risked it all."

It was this faith that stirred Caleb 40 years later to confidently take on the God-sized task of, once again, making the request to go into and take the promised land, Struecker said, paraphrasing Caleb's words to Joshua: "...if you will let me, my family and I will go into

the land and I know God, who has always been faithful, will be faithful to us in the future."

"It is this that inspires me more than anything else," Struecker said. "This man is saying, 'Without God on my side, there is no way I'll win, and with Him on my side, there's no way I'll lose.'"

In God's army, Struecker said, all believers are "generals" under the command of the Great Commander, with certain expectations of actions in battle.

"He is calling you to take risks. If you think you want a ministry that is comfortable, you have something seriously wrong," Struecker said.

"Some of the most difficult mission fields are still out there and it's my prayer you will say, 'Give me the most difficult mission and I'll go, knowing You will be faithful to me.'"

Because of this faith in God's faithfulness and ability to conquer, Caleb received a God-sized reward, Struecker said. "God overwhelmingly gave him victory and 'the land had rest from war,'" he said, quoting from verse 15.

"Because he was a man of faith, willing to bet it all on the Lord, there was really no battle at all and the city of Hebron belongs to Israel today," Struecker said. "My prayer is that you would do something radical across the globe because of your faith in Jesus. Say, 'Give me that hill country. Give me victory for our Savior Jesus Christ.'"